

Indians urge sales ban on 'Custer's Revenge' video game

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) — The University of North Dakota Indian Association is urging a ban on sales in Grand Forks of an adult video game called "Custer's Revenge," Mary Jane Schneider, who chairs UND's Indian Studies Department, said.

In a petition being circulated at the university, the Indian Association said, "We are of the opinion that the game contributes to racial discrimination, stereotyping and it appears to legitimize the act of rape by making a game of it."

The petition signatures eventually will be presented to the Grand Forks City Council, Schneider said.

"What we're operating on is that communities have a right to determine what is pornographic," she told the Grand Forks Herald.

Schneider said that because of the

substantial Indian population in Grand Forks — about 250 Indians at UND and 1,000 in the city — sale of the game is not "in the best interest of the community, and most women would feel it is not in their best interest."

But Stuart Kesten, president of American Multiple Industries, the Northridge, Calif., company that markets the game, said "Custer's Revenge" is not racist or sexist.

"The game's scenario merely is along the lines of the cowboys-and-Indians movies that everyone grew up with," Kesten said. "The product is for adults to be purchased or not purchased by them for viewing in their own homes."

"I respect the right of people to petition. I just wish they would respect our right and the right of people to buy

the game," Kesten said in a telephone interview.

The object of the game is to match the Gen. Custer figure, dressed only in cowboy boots and hat, with the Indian woman, known as "Revenge." Custer must dodge a hail of arrows to get to the Indian woman figure.

"They do couple, but that is far from rape," Kesten said. "You do have a sexual act, but that is not rape. You do have a man going toward a woman, but that is not rape. People looking at the game quite objectively do not see it as rape — the Indian girl kicks up her heels and smiles."

"I'm sure 90 percent or more of the people signing the petition have never seen the product they are condemning," Kesten said.

He said "Custer's Revenge" has been distributed for a month and

more than 140,000 games have been sold nationwide.

"Any interference from a local government body that infringes on our rights to sell the game will be vigorously opposed," Kesten said.

He said his firm recently filed a complaint in U.S. District Court against Suffolk County, N.Y., because of the voluntary ban on sales of "Custer's Revenge" there.

Wassaja, a national newspaper for American Indians, says several national organizations have condemned "Custer's Revenge," including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Organization for Women, the National Tribal Chairmen's Association, the Urban League and Ohoy, the national Indian women's group.